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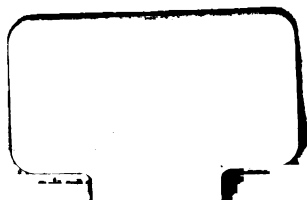
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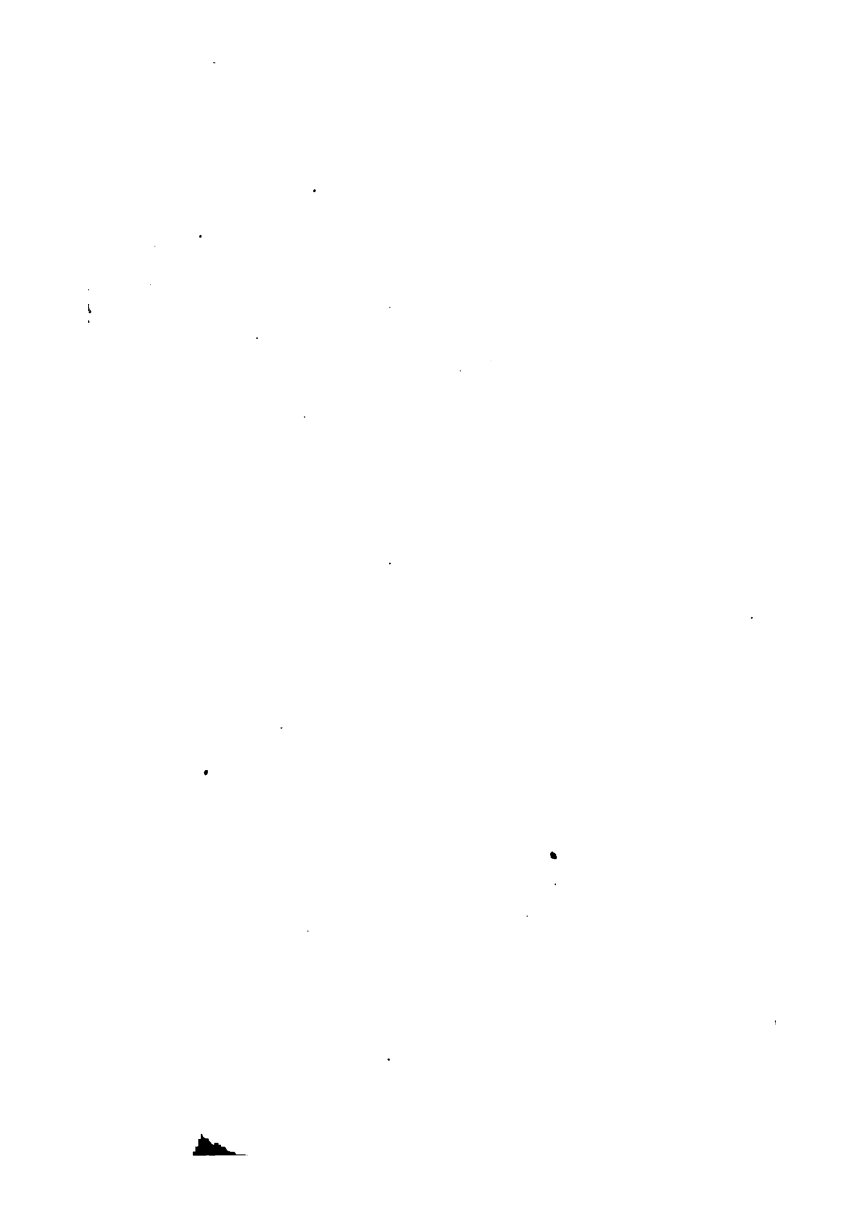
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THE CLASS AND STANDARD SERIES
OF
READING BOOKS.



BOOK II.

LONDON
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.
NEW-STREET SQUARE

THE CLASS AND STANDARD SERIES
OF
READING BOOKS

ADAPTED TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE REVISED CODE.

BY

CHARLES BILTON, B.A.

ASSISTANT TO HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS.

BOOK II.

(STANDARD II.)

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1867.

STANDARD II.

Requirements of the Revised Code.

Reading.—One of the narratives next in order after monosyllables in an elementary reading book used in the school.

Writing.—Copy in manuscript character a line of print.

Arithmetic.—A sum in simple addition or subtraction, and the multiplication table.



PREFACE.

THIS BOOK is intended for children who are already tolerably familiar with lessons in words of one syllable. In schools under inspection such children will be preparing to pass in Standard II.; and for them the book is especially adapted. When presented for examination, they will be required to read a 'narrative next in order after monosyllables.' All the prose lessons in Book II. are of this kind, containing as they do only words of one and two syllables in length. At first but few dissyllables—and those of the simplest and easiest kind—are introduced; but with the lessons they become more frequent. In this manner the foundation laid by the teaching of the lessons in the Introductory Primer and the First Book of the Series,

is gradually widened and strengthened. A store of dissyllabic words is acquired by the scholars, and thus by degrees their knowledge of the language is extended. To provide a copious, yet simple, vocabulary ought to be the principal aim of the first books in a series for teaching reading.

The lessons in the book are varied as much as possible, and are such as to interest young children. Among them will be found lessons on animals and familiar objects, instructive fables and stories, and simple verses.

A similar plan is recommended to be pursued in teaching reading and spelling to Standard II. as that suggested in the preface to Book I.

C. B.

LONDON: *June*, 1867.

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READING BOOK

N° II.



1. THE BOY LOST IN THE SNOW.

LET us sit down round the fire this cold night, and I will tell you a true tale of a dog.

A long way from this place, in a land where there is a great deal of cold, and much snow falls, and where the hills are so large and so high, that their tops seem to be as high as the sky, there live some good men, who do all they can to help folks who pass over these hills. These folks have been known to sink in the snow, and the cold makes them so weak and faint, that they sleep till the cold and frost kill them; for great cold makes us apt to sleep, and those who sleep a long time in the snow are sure to die.

Well, these good men, who live in a house in the midst of the high hills, keep some large dogs, and they teach them to go out to seek for those who may be lost in the snow-drifts.

Snow-drifts are large heaps of snow, or snow blown by the wind into lumps, and they are deep. The dogs have so fine a scent or smell, that they can find folks by means of it, when it is too dark to see, or when the folks they go out to look for lie hid in the deep snow-drifts. When they have found a man, they bark till they bring some of the good men to them; and then these men, with the aid of the dogs, take the poor man out of the snow, and help him to their house, where they give him food to eat, and a fire to warm him.

One sad cold night, when the snow fell fast, and the wind blew loud and shrill, and it was quite dark, with not a star to be seen in the sky, these good men sent out a dog to seek for those who might want help. In an hour or two the dog was heard barking at the gate; and, when the men went to look out, they saw the dog there with a boy on his back. The poor child was stiff

with cold, and could but just hold on the dog's back. The men took the boy in, and, when he was warm and had had some food, he told them that he had lain a long time in the snow, and was too ill and weak to walk, and the snow was falling fast on him, when he felt something pull him by the coat, and heard the bark of a dog close by him. The boy put out his hand, and felt the hair of the dog; and then the dog gave him one more pull. This gave the poor boy some hope, and he took hold of the dog, and drew himself out of the snow; but he felt that he could not stand. He then got up on the dog's back, and put his arms round the dog's neck, and thus he held on. He felt sure that the dog did not mean to hurt him; and he rode on the dog's back all the way to the house of the good men, who took care of the boy till the snow was gone, when they sent him to his own home.

2. THE IDLE BOY.

THERE was once a little boy who was not higher than the table, and his father and mother sent him to school.

It was a very pleasant morning, the sun shone, and the birds sang in the trees. Now this little boy did not love his book much, for he was an idle little boy; and he had a great mind to play, instead of going to school. And he saw a bee flying about, first upon this flower, and then upon that. So he said, 'Pretty bee! will you come and play with me?' But the bee said, 'No, I must not be idle; I must go and gather honey.' Then the little boy met a dog, and he said, 'Dog! will you play with me?' But the dog said, 'No, I must not be idle; I am going to catch a hare for my master's dinner: I must make haste and catch it.' Then the little boy went by a hay-rick, and he saw a bird pulling some hay out of the hay-rick, and he said, 'Little bird! will you come and play with me?' But the bird said, 'No, I must not be idle; I must get some hay to build my nest with, and some moss, and some wool.' So the bird flew away. Then the little boy saw a horse, and he said, 'Horse! will you play with me?' but the horse said, 'No, I must not be idle; I must go and

plough, or else there will be no corn to make bread of.'

Then the little boy thought to himself, 'What! is no one idle? Then little boys must not be idle either.' So he made haste, and went to school, and learned his lessons very well, and the master said he was a good boy.

3. CLOTHING.

THE sheep has a fleece to keep him warm; the wool of his fleece keeps out the cold nicely.

The cat and the rabbit, and the beaver, have thick fur.

The horse has hair and a fine flowing mane; how it hangs over his neck, and waves in the wind, as he prances along!

Cows have a thick hide with short hair to clothe them.

The birds have feathers: thick, soft, warm feathers.

The snail has a shell, like a little house, to shelter him from the cold.

Were little boys and girls born with anything to keep them warm?

No; nothing but soft thin skin: a pin would scratch it and make it bleed. Poor little naked boy!

But the little boy has got many things. His jacket is made of warm wool shorn from the sheep; his hat is the fur of the rabbit or beaver; his shoes are made of the skin of the calf; his shirt comes from a plant which grows in the fields.

God has given men sense to make things; but sheep and cattle, and cats and dogs, and birds, cannot spin and weave as men can, so they are born with their clothing on their backs. The reason why little boys and girls have only their soft naked skin is, that their parents can get clothes to cover them by thinking and working.

4. THE FLY.

WHAT a sharp little fellow is Mister Fly!
He goes where he pleases, low or high;
He can walk just as well with his feet to
the sky

As I can on the floor!
At the window he comes with a buzz and
a roar,

And o'er the smooth glass can easily pass,
Or through the key-hole of the door.

He eats the sugar and goes away,
Nor ever once asks what there is to pay.
And sometimes he crosses the tea-pot's
steam,

And comes and plunges his head in the
cream :

Then on the edge of the jug he stands,
And cleans his wings with his feet and
hands.

This done, through the window he hurries
away,

And gives a buzz, as if to say,
' At present I have not a minute to stay,
But I'll peep in again in the course of the
day.'

Then away he'll fly, where the sunbeams
lie,
And neither stop to shake hands nor bid
one good-bye.

Such a strange little fellow is Mister Fly,
Who goes where he pleases, low or high,
And can walk on the ceiling without ever
feeling

A fear of tumbling down ' sky-high.'

5. ROOKS.

‘Look up, mamma, and see what a large flight of birds there is in the air—quite up; and they are all flying one way; they seem to me to be black, but they are so high up, I cannot see what they are like.’

‘Those birds, my dear, are rooks. They are now on their way home to their nests, and have, I dare say, been a long way seeking food for their young. They live on worms, grubs, and grain. They build their nests on the tops of high trees, such as the beech and elm; they make them of sticks and dry roots of grass: it takes three or four days to build a nest when they work hard; and, while one rook goes to fetch the sticks and grass, its mate sits close by on the tree watching the nest.

‘The hen-bird lays four or five eggs, on which she sits till the young ones come out of the shell.

‘Rooks live in flocks, and they will not let a strange rook come to live with them; if one should chance to come to build with them, they fall upon him in a rage, and

beat him, and drive him away. The old rooks often use the same nest from year to year, mending it when it gets old. When the young ones are about to make their first nest, they choose with great care the bough on which to build; and, if they think the old rooks cannot see them, they will steal the sticks and grass from their friends' nests, to build their own with; but, as soon as the rest of the rooks find out the theft, they set to work to pull down the nest of the thief, who has all his work to do once more.

‘Rooks live in the same place for years, and it is hard to drive them from the trees where they have once built. I have heard that, when these trees have been cut down, the rooks have been seen making their nests in them as they lay on the ground. When they go to feed, they will fly some miles in flocks, such as you see now, to a field where they can find the food they like. When they get there, some of the rooks perch themselves on the high trees near, to watch. As soon as one of these birds sees a man coming that way, he flies off the tree, and caws as loud as he can; then

up fly all the birds from the ground, and off they go in great haste.

‘They are so sly, that they seem to know that a gun will kill them; for a man with a gun in his hand has a hard task to get near them; but they do not seem to fear a stick; a man with a stick may walk up close to them.

‘You have heard Tom say that he has been out to bolt rooks. This is a sport which some persons are fond of. When the rooks are young, too young to leave their nests, men take a cross-bow, and with a ball made of lead aim at them as they sit on the edge of their nests; the ball strikes them a hard blow, and kills them. Men use an air-gun as well as a cross-bow to kill rooks with. These bows and guns make no noise; if they did, the rooks would get into their nests, and could not be seen, for they soon take fright; but, as they hear no noise, they know no cause for fear: and, though they see their friends fall down, they cannot tell why, and they sit still to be shot at. Poor things! How sad the old rooks must feel when they come home at night, with food for their young, to find them dead or gone!’

6. THE OLD CROW.

‘I WILL not go to school,’ said little Tommy;
‘I will stay in the fields and play all day long.’

It was the first of May, and the sun was shining, and the air smelt sweet, as it does in spring; so Tommy sat down on a soft bank under a tree, and threw his books into the hedge.

‘I will not go to school,’ he said again; ‘this bank is softer than the form at school, and I like to see the lambs and flowers better than books and slates.’

Just as he said this, he looked up in the tree, and saw two old crows sitting there, and close by them a nest, very much like a bundle of sticks.

‘Here’s a pretty fellow!’ said one of the crows; ‘he says he won’t go to school; here’s a pretty dunce!’ and the birds began to say, ‘Caw! caw! caw!’ as if they were laughing at Tommy.

‘What! you do not like work?’ said the crow again. ‘Oh, you idle boy, you are worse than a bird! do you think I am idle?’

Look at my nest; what do you think of it?’

‘I dare say it is a very nice one,’ said Tommy, ‘but I should not like to live in it.’

‘No, because you are only a boy, and not so wise as a crow,’ said his new friend; and both the crows cried ‘Caw! caw! caw!’ again, as if they thought so too.

‘Do you know why a crow is wiser than a silly boy?’ asked the crow, putting his head on one side, and looking down at Tommy with his bright black eye.

‘No,’ said Tommy; ‘I thought boys were wiser than crows.’

‘You thought!’ said the crow; ‘a great deal you know about it. Can you build a house for yourself, pray?’

‘No,’ said Tommy; ‘but when I am a man, I shall.’

‘And why can’t you do it now?’ said the crow, turning his head to the other side, and looking at Tommy with the other eye.

‘Why, I have not learnt,’ said the little boy.

‘Ho, ho!’ said the crow, flapping his

wings and hopping round and round: 'he must learn to build a house, this wise fellow! Here's a pretty boy! here's a wise boy!'

Both the crows, when they heard this, flapped their wings too, and cried 'Caw! caw! caw!' louder than before

'No one taught me to build my house,' said the crow, when they were quiet again. 'I knew how to do it at once; and look at it, what a nice house it is! I brought all the sticks it is made of myself. I flew through the air with them in my mouth! some of them were very heavy, but I do not mind hard work. I am not like a little boy I know;' and the crow shook his head and looked so hard at Tommy, that he felt as if it were his master looking at him, and was quite afraid.

'But there are other things in the world besides houses,' said Tommy.

'Yes, indeed,' said the crow, 'I was just thinking so; 'you want clothes as well as a house.'

'That we do,' said Tommy, 'and new ones very often; but you birds can't wear clothes.'

‘Who told you that?’ said the crow, in a very sharp tone. ‘Look at my coat, if you please, and tell me if you ever saw a finer suit of black than mine. Could you make yourself such a suit?’

‘No,’ said Tommy; ‘but I can learn.’

‘Yes, yes, you can learn; but that is the way with you silly boys. You must learn every thing, and yet you are too idle to set about it. Why, ever since my feathers grew, I have always been clothed in a black suit.’

Tommy felt that the crow had the best of it. ‘Dear me,’ he said to himself, ‘I never thought crows were so wise and clever!’

‘You may say that,’ said the crow, coming down on a bough a little nearer to Tommy; ‘but there is more for you to learn yet. How about your food, Master Tom? Who gives you food?’

‘Why, mother does,’ said Tommy.

‘You are a baby, then?’

‘No, indeed, I am not,’ said Tommy; ‘and I will throw a stone at you if you say I am.’

‘Boys should never throw stones,’ said

the crow, very gravely. 'We never throw stones; it is a very rude trick. I only asked if you were a baby, because when a crow can go alone he finds his own food.'

'I shall do that when I am grown up,' said Tommy. 'I shall learn how.'

'Dear me,' said the crow, 'you have a great deal to learn before you can be as wise as a crow!'

'That is true,' said Tommy, hanging his head; 'but there is plenty of time.'

'I am not so sure of that,' said the crow. 'You are as big as twenty crows, and yet you are not as wise as one. A pretty fellow to come and lie on the grass all day, when you are such a dunce! Go to school! go to school! go to school! go to school!' Both the crows took up the cry, and made such a noise, that Tommy picked up his books to throw at them; but they flew up to the highest bough, and cried 'Caw! caw! caw!' till Tommy could bear it no longer. He put his hand over his ears, and ran off to school as hard as he could. He was just in time, and did his lessons well. His master said he was good boy, and he went home quite happy.

As he passed by the tree, the old crow was sitting there, but he did not look at Tommy. 'Come, come,' said Tommy, 'do not be cross, old friend. I threw my book at you because I was cross with myself for being idle and silly.' But the crow looked as if he had never said a word in his life, and had never seen Tommy before.

So the little boy went home and told his mother; but she said birds did not talk, and he must have been asleep and dreamt it. But Tommy does not think so; and when he feels idle he always says to himself, 'Come, come, Master Tommy, you must work hard; for you are not yet as wise as an old crow.'

7. WHO TAUGHT THEM.

Who taught the bird to build her nest
Of wool, and hay, and moss?

Who taught her how to weave it best,
And lay the twigs across?

Who taught the busy bee to fly
Among the sweetest flowers;
And lay her store of honey by,
To eat in winter hours?

Who taught the little ants the way
Their narrow holes to bore,
And through the pleasant summer's day
To gather up their store ?

'T was God who taught them all the way,
And gave their little skill,
And teaches children, when they pray,
To do His holy will.

8. THE BAKER AND HIS WORK.

I HAD been out one morning for a walk before breakfast, and on my way home I made up my mind to have a look round the baker's shop, which I had to pass. I found Mr. Green, the owner, standing at his shop door. He was a stout man, with a pleasant round face ; was dressed in light grey clothes, and had on a white apron, and a cap of the same colour. After bidding him good morning, and telling him I had a few minutes to spare, I walked into the shop, all parts of which were kept very clean, though somewhat dusty with flour. There were long rows of loaves on the shelves ; in the window, loaves, biscuits, and buns were put ready for sale ; and I

saw the baker's boy going out with a basket full of hot rolls. After I had seen the shop, Mr. Green led the way through a door at the far end, then along a narrow passage, and I found myself in the bake-house. This was so hot and close, that I felt hardly able to take breath. But I stayed long enough to observe the baker's men and boys; all with their shirt sleeves tucked up to their elbows—some making and others baking the loaves, biscuits, and other good things, which you can buy at the baker's. I was glad to get once more into the fresh air, where I could breathe more freely.

Bread in England is made chiefly of wheat ground by the miller into flour; sometimes it is made of rye or barley; and in Scotland, oat-meal cakes are much eaten. To make bread, the flour is mixed with water, some yeast, and a little salt, and kneaded into a thick paste, called dough. This is weighed into portions, which are baked in a large oven. When it is taken out we find that the outside or crust of a loaf is hard and of a brownish colour; the inside or crumb is white, soft,

and porous, that is, full of holes, caused by the yeast.

Bread forms the greater part of our daily food. New bread is not so good and wholesome for any one, as that which has been kept two or three days ; but if too old, it will become sour and turn mouldy.

Bread is so very much used as food, that it has been called the 'staff of life.' And really boys and girls would be badly off without their slices of bread and butter for breakfast and tea.

9. THE SHEEP.

THE Sheep is one of the most useful creatures which God has given to man. I need not describe a sheep for you, as whether you live in town or country, you must often have seen one. Sometimes you will meet a flock of sheep driven along the road, or through the street, by a man and a dog. Or you may see them feeding in the fields and on the hill sides, and looking at a distance like so many little white dots. And in spring time there are the young lambs, skipping and frisking around their

mothers, full of fun and play. In this country sheep are always fed in the fields or the mountain pastures, where they can remain all the year round, not only by day but by night too, since there are now no wild beasts—such as wolves—to devour them. In winter, when the snow covers the ground, and they cannot find enough herbage, hay and turnips are given to them. In those lands where wild beasts abound, as soon as night comes on, the shepherd must collect all his sheep, and pen them up in what is called a sheep-fold. Our shepherds follow their flocks when they have to move them from place to place; and a large dog assists in keeping the sheep from going astray. But in eastern countries (which we read about in the Bible), the shepherd goes before his flock, and calls them all by name, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. There, when the shepherds have penned up their flocks, they have often to watch all night, in order to guard their charge from robbers or wild beasts, that try to get into the fold. It was to a party of such shepherds, ‘keeping watch over their

flocks by night,' that an angel was sent, and while 'the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid,' he told them of the birth of our blessed Lord.

I have said that the sheep is of great use to us. During its lifetime, in the summer, its fleece of wool is cut off its back with a large pair of scissors, called shears. This wool is made into warm clothing, such as coats, cloaks, stockings, and suchlike things. After the sheep has been killed its flesh, called mutton, is one of the best kinds of food ; and its skin is made into leather.

10. THE BOY AND THE SHEEP.

' LAZY sheep, pray tell me why
In the pleasant fields you lie,
Eating grass and daisies white,
From the morning till the night ?
Everything can something do,
But what kind of use are you ? '

' Nay, my little fellow, nay,
Do not serve me so, I pray :

Don't you see the wool that grows
On my back to make you clothes ?
Cold, ay, very cold you'd be,
If you had not wool from me.

' True, it seems a pleasant thing,
Nipping daisies in the spring ;
But the chilly nights I pass,
On the cold and dewy grass,
Or pick my scanty dinner where
All the common's brown and bare.

' Then the farmer comes at last,
When the merry spring is past,
Cuts my woolly fleece away,
For your coat in wintry day ;
Little Master this is why,
In the pleasant fields I lie.'

11. THE SEASONS—SPRING.

WHAT a pleasant time of the year is spring ! There is gladness in the very sound of the name ; and all people, old or young, love and welcome this season ; for then it is that the earth, and all things thereon seem as if waking to new life.

The cold, the frost, and the snows of winter are all past, and once more—

The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.

At first the early mornings are cold, but daily the sun's heat is stronger; the nights become shorter, and we have more daylight, so that when school is over boys and girls can now run and play in the fields. Here the grass grows greener and greener from day to day; and you may notice how the buds shoot on the trees and hedge-rows till at last they burst forth into full leaf. Pretty flowers spring up on all sides—in gardens and in meadows, on green banks and in the shady nooks of the woods. You may gather the snowdrop, the crocus, and the tulip; the yellow wall-flower, and the stock, 'that scents the garden round;' the daisy and the primrose, of which all children are so fond. The trees in the orchards are full of gay blossoms, giving promise of plenty of nice fruit in the autumn; and in the month of May, the hawthorn is white over with its sweet-scented flowers.

They who walk through the fields in

the country will now see the young lambs jumping and frisking about, all merry and full of fun. The birds may be heard singing their sweet songs all day long. At daybreak the lark springs up from his grassy bed, and mounts higher and higher, singing amid the dawning clouds to his mate below; and at sunset whilst

The blackbird whistles from the thorny brake,

the bullfinch answers from the grove, and the linnets sing sweetly, perched upon the furze bushes. You may hear, also, among the trees, the harsh notes of the jay, the rook, and the jackdaw; while the soft cooing of the doves to each other sounds like a pleasant murmur through the quiet woods. And those birds that left us during the winter for warmer lands than this, now return; and some fine warm day you may be startled by the sound of 'Cuckoo! cuckoo!' Most children know this sound, and dearly they love to listen to it, for it tells them that warm weather and bright sunshine are come; and as often as the school-boy hears this bird, he calls aloud in reply, 'Cuckoo! cuckoo!'

Now, what do you think it is that makes

the birds so merry and happy? It is because they are now busy building their pretty nests, in which to lay their eggs and hatch their young. Some birds make their dwelling in the holly-hedge, some in the thicket, and some among thorn and furze bushes; a few build in holes in the trees on which they find moss for their nests, and the insects they feed upon. Besides moss, birds pick up hay, dry sprigs of trees,

And often from the careless backs
Of herds and flocks, a thousand tugging bills
Pluck hair and wool;

and oft, when no one sees them, they 'steal a straw from the barn,' till at length the nest is made—so soft and warm, clean and complete. Then in this the hen lays her eggs, on which she sits till the young birds appear, at first quite naked, and without a single feather. Away now fly the parents in search of proper food for their little ones. They take great care of their young; and feed them till they are fledged and able to fly and get their own living.

When spring comes, the farmer and his men must plough the land, and sow the grain in his fields, so that he may have good crops of corn in the autumn. He is

glad to see the pleasant April showers ; for they soften the ground, and with the help of the sun make the seeds spring up, and cause all kinds of herbs and flowers to grow on the earth.

12. THE VOICE OF SPRING.

I AM coming, little maiden !
With the pleasant sunshine laden ;
With the honey for the bee ;
With the blossom for the tree ;
With the flower and with the leaf ;
Till I come the time is brief.

I am coming, I am coming.
Hark ! the little bee is humming ;
See ! the lark is soaring high
In the bright and sunny sky,
And the gnats are on the wing :
Little maiden, now is Spring.

See the yellow catkins cover
All the slender willows over ;
And on the mossy banks so green
Starlike primroses are seen ;
Every little stream is bright ;
All the orchard trees are white.

Hark! the little lambs are bleating;
And the cawing rooks are meeting
In the elms, a noisy crowd;
And all birds are singing loud;
And the first white butterfly
In the sun goes flitting by.

13. THE FOX AND THE GOAT.

ONE hot sultry day, a fox was walking with his horned friend, the goat. The latter was one of the most honest creatures in the whole world, while the former was a perfect master in all kinds of deceit. As they went along in the heat of the sun, their thirst became so pressing that they looked about for means to quench it. At last they found a well at the bottom of a pit, and both leaped down, in order to drink of the clear cool water. After each had taken enough, and quenched his thirst, the fox said to the goat, 'What shall we do now, my friend? Drinking is very pleasant when one is thirsty; but we have at present to think of getting out of this pit, the sides of which are very high and steep.' They tried many plans, but with-

out success. At last the cunning fox cried out, 'I have it! I have it! Do you but raise yourself on your hind legs, at the same time placing your fore feet against the side of the pit; then it will be easy for me to climb along your back, and stepping on your horns to reach the top; and once there, I will soon pull you up also. The simple goat did not think that to lift him was beyond the strength of the fox. So he at once fell into the plan, saying, 'How clever you are! How I admire your skill! As for me, I should never have found out this way of escape.' Then, doing as the fox had told him, Reynard was soon safe at the top; from whence looking down upon the poor goat at the bottom, he said laughing, 'Be patient, my friend; if you had half as much sense as you have beard, you would never have been in this pit at all—you would have looked before you leaped. Good-bye, and let me advise you to use all your efforts in trying to escape. I must be off, as I have something to do that prevents my staying with you any longer.'

14. THE SQUIRREL.

ONE fine summer's day, many years ago, when I was a boy, I was walking along a road, on either side of which there was a row of high trees. Their branches met over my head and formed a pleasant shade from the sun, that here and there sent its bright rays through the spaces between the leaves. All at once I stopped; for just before me at the foot of one of the largest trees was a handsome squirrel, sitting on its hind legs and eating a nut. The pretty creature had not heard or seen me, for I had been walking on slowly, and had made but little noise. I stood for a short time watching its movements—as it sat there erect, with its long bushy tail cocked up behind, and looking like a large feather over its back; all the while holding the nut to its mouth with its fore paws, and nibbling away with its strong, sharp teeth—the very picture of content. It was a full grown squirrel about the size of a kitten, with a handsome reddish-brown fur coat, whiskers on its face like those of

a cat, pretty bright eyes, long pointed ears, and a tail much longer than its body. I said to myself, 'If I can, I will catch it, and take it home with me, to put in the squirrel's cage.'

I did right to say, 'If I can;' for no sooner did I begin to move towards it than with its quick ears, it caught the sound made by my feet, and turning to give but one glance at me, it darted up the tree, and in an instant was high among the branches. I could scarcely follow with my eyes its movements, as it sprung from bough to bough and from tree to tree! For an instant it would stop and look back; but if I took a step towards it, away it would dart again. Seeing that I had no chance of catching it, I went on my way, thinking of all I had heard or read about the squirrel.

The squirrel delights in beech and oak woods, and in such it is mostly found; sometimes it is met with in the parks that surround the houses of wealthy people. Those who have watched its playful habits when wild, tell us that it will frolic and gambol with its mate, now on the smooth

turf, now up and down the tree-stem, and anon among the branches, each movement of its little body being graceful. The squirrel and its mate build their nest in a high tree, and they use for this purpose twigs, leaves, and bits of dried moss. An old squirrel can never be tamed; but if one be taken very young—a nestling—it becomes docile, and soon learns to know and love those who feed and pet it.

The squirrel gathers and lays up in some hole or in its nest a store of acorns, nuts, berries, &c., against the winter, when it is not able to find its food on the trees. If you will take my advice, when you have to work you will be like the squirrel, and put by a portion of your wages against old age, when you will no longer be able to work for your living.

I have read a story of a squirrel, whose master used to carry it about with him in one of his coat pockets. As often as it saw him prepare to go out, it would run up his legs and plunge into its retreat. As he walked along the streets it would peep out at the passers-by; but as soon as he reached the outskirts of the town, out

it would come, leap on the ground, run among the hedges, and ascend to the tops of trees, now and then pausing to nibble the leaves or the bark. If its master went forward, it would descend and scamper after him, and again enter his pocket. In this manner it would amuse itself during the walks its owner was in the habit of taking.

15. THE HEN AND CHICKENS.

SEE the chickens round the gate
For their morning portion wait:
Fill the basket from the store,
Open wide the cottage door!
Throw out crumbs, and scatter seed;
Let the hungry chickens feed.
Call them;—now how fast they run,
Gladly, quickly, every one!
Eager, busy hen and chick,
Every little morsel pick.
See the hen with callow brood,
To her young how kind and good!
With what care their steps she leads!
Them, and not herself, she feeds;
Picking here, and picking there,
Where the nicest morsels are.

As she calls, they flock around,
Bustling all along the ground;
Till their daily labours cease,
And at night they rest in peace,
All the little tiny things
Nestling close beneath her wings.
There she keeps them safe and warm,
Free from fear and free from harm.

16. THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.

A HARE was one day boasting of his swift running to some of his friends, when a tortoise, who had heard him, crawled up and said to him, 'I challenge you to run a race with me, and I will wager that you do not reach the winning-post before me.' 'Before you!' cried the hare, with a smile of contempt; 'surely you have lost your senses! Why, you are one of the slowest creatures in the whole world.' 'Well,' replied the tortoise, 'let those laugh who win; I stick to my wager, whether I am in my senses or not.' 'Come on, then,' said the hare, 'and you will soon see where you will be left.' So it was agreed that they should start at once.

When the signal was given, off went the tortoise direct for the place fixed upon, creeping along with her slow but steady pace, never stopping a moment to look back, and thus each minute drawing nearer and nearer the winning-post. But the hare, treating the whole matter very lightly, said to himself, 'What is the use of my starting yet? I may as well allow my rival to get half the way before I follow; it will then be some glory to have won the race, whereas to start at the same time as the tortoise, and then win, would be no credit to me at all. In the meantime I will nibble a little of the newly-mown hay, and then take a short nap, after which I will show my friend what running is.'

The time passed, and at the end of an hour the hare was still sleeping soundly, while the tortoise plodded on as before. All of a sudden the hare started up, and saw his rival far ahead. He darted off swift as an arrow, to catch her up and beat her; but his boasted powers were now of no use. He reached the goal only to see that the tortoise had passed it. 'Ah, my friend,' cried she, 'was I not right? You see I

have beaten you, with all your swiftness; and where, pray, would you have been, if, like myself, you had carried your home on your back?' Boys and girls should not forget that it is not the quickest who will always have learnt most at the end of the year, but that often

Slow and steady wins the race.

17. THE RABBIT.

PART I.

OF all the pets which boys delight to rear, the rabbit without doubt holds the first place; and even girls sometimes keep this pretty creature. The rearing of rabbits affords great pleasure, and it is a pleasure any child can indulge in; for rabbits may be made not only to pay for their own keep, but often to furnish a dish for the table. If you wish to rear rabbits, you should choose a snug corner of a warm stable, or an out-house, or a nice place in the garden, where you can put as many hutches as you want. The rabbit-hutch you can make for yourself, if you are clever enough, out of an old egg-chest or a tea-box; but it would be better if you

can afford to have a good one made by a joiner. This house should always be kept dry and well-aired, as the rabbit, in a state of nature, prefers a dry and airy dwelling ; and if they live in wet and damp places, they will die of what is called the rot. You should therefore raise your hutch above the ground ; you will then be better able to keep it clean and free from dirt, a thing you ought to be very careful about.

Having got your rabbit-hutch all ready, you should now choose your rabbits. They differ so much in colour that you have plenty of choice. In this respect, gray rabbits take the lowest rank ; then black ones ; those which are fawn, white, and gray hold the third place ; pure white, with red eyes, are higher still ; the tortoise-shell and black and white rank the highest. Others, which are much liked by some people, are of a mouse colour. You may purchase rabbits at prices that vary, of course, with their age, size, and beauty, and the county you live in. But, as a rule, you may get a couple of young rabbits a month old for one shilling, and

sometimes they are sold for much less than that sum. When half-grown they fetch from eighteen-pence to half-a-crown each, and for four or five shillings you may buy a first-rate full-grown rabbit. The stout rabbit with short legs is thought to be the most healthy of all.

THE RABBIT.

PART II.

In feeding, rabbits require very great care. You may starve them by giving them too much food at once, as they get to dislike and refuse it. Instead therefore of feeding your rabbits twice daily, as is the common custom, do so three times a day; they will thus not require so much each time, enjoy their food more, and thrive better. In the morning give them a handful of hay or dry clover, and a little of such green food as is in season; about noon, some good oats or meal; at night, more green stuff and hay, if that which was given in the morning is all eaten. Rabbits are very fond of green food, but do not let them have too much, and care should be taken that this

is quite dry. No green meat is better for rabbits than parsley and the tops of carrots, and the roots of the latter are eaten with much relish. Besides these, a lettuce, the leaves (or, better still, the stump) of a cabbage, turnips, and parsnips may sometimes be given them. If well fed, and kept warm, you may have a great many young rabbits in a year.

In a part of the hutch made ready for the purpose, the doe makes a nest of hay and lines it with her own fur. The young rabbits are blind for some days after birth, and we must then be careful not to look at or in any way disturb them, or the old one will kill them all. That the keeping of rabbits yields profit is shown by the fact that a working man in the country, who kept a batch of them in a small wooden house, killed yearly about twenty dozen, without touching his stock. What with the skins, the flesh, and the sale of the young, he turned the rabbits to good account; and yet their food scarcely ever cost him a penny, and even the trouble of them was spared to him, after he had taught his children how to manage them.

Wild rabbits live in holes, which they make or burrow in the ground with their front paws. In the country you may often see places where they collect in large numbers, and form what is called a rabbit warren—a sort of village of these creatures, with its streets and houses under the earth. On a fine day, you may observe them jumping about, and playing with each other. Should a man or, what is worse to them, a dog come in sight, they vanish in a moment into their burrows. Many of these creatures are shot during the autumn, and sent to the market for sale.

18. THE LITTLE TROUT.

‘DEAR mother,’ said a little fish,

‘Pray is not that a fly?

I’m very hungry, and I wish

You’d let me go and try.’

‘Sweet innocent,’ the mother cried,

And started from her nook,

‘That painted fly is put to hide

A sharp and barbed hook.’

Now, as I've heard, this little trout
Was young and foolish too,
And so he thought he'd venture out
To see if it were true.

And round about the hook he played
With many a longing look,
And 'Dear me!' to himself he said,
'I'm sure that's not a hook.

'Sure, I may give one little pluck:
Let's see, and so I will.'
So on he went, and lo! it struck
Quite through his little gill!

And as he faint and fainter grew,
With hollow voice he cried,
'Dear mother, if I'd minded you
I need not now have died.'

19. THE SWALLOW.

PART I.

The swallow is come!
The swallow is come!
O, fair are the seasons, and light
Are the days that she brings,
With her dusky wings
And her bosom of snowy white.

WE often hear it said that one swallow
does not make a summer. This is true,

for we may chance to see one of these birds on the wing, just come out of some hiding-place, when a few warm days early in the spring have brought it to life again. The one bird may get a chill, and die before the rest of its tribe come back from the warm south, where they spend the winter, when we have no flies or insects for them to live upon here. Before summer sets in, the swallows come to the coast of our island in large flights, and spread themselves over the country, to seek the places where they built their nests the year before. They soon put them in order, or build fresh ones, and rear a new brood; and they chase about in the air to catch food, and enjoy their life free from care. On fine days they fly very high, and look as if just under the fleecy clouds. It is a sign of rain when they skim low and just over the ground.

It is near places where water lies that the swallows choose to dwell, and they are hardly ever seen in very large towns. Swallows often rear two broods in a season. The last-born are sometimes too weak to fly to other lands, and these lie half dead

in winter, and a few wake to life in the spring. When the young are fledged, they may be seen on a house-top, all in a row, waiting till the old birds bring them food; and even when they can fly a little, they are still fed, in an odd and quick way, while on the wing. The old birds seem to give food to each young one every three minutes, and this is done all day long. The swallow always makes friends where it goes—its life is so useful, and no farmer can find fault with it. Sometimes a housemaid will grumble at the dirt and litter when nests cluster thick under the roof of a house; but this is only a proof that flies abound, which would be quite a plague in kitchen and larder if these birds did not keep them in check.

In a country town, some very old houses were taken down in the summer time. These had been the dwelling-place, for years, of a kind of swallow that we call swifts, or house-martins. The young were all in the nests, and the poor old birds rent the air with their cries and screams. For two or three nights none could sleep within hearing of their distress. They

flew round and round, and could take no comfort for the loss of their little ones.

THE SWALLOW.

PART II.

One kind of swallow is called the sand-martin; it bores in holes in sand-pits, or in the soft sand-bank by the side of a stream of water, and works away with its bill close shut, moving from side to side, just as we should make a hole with a stick. It takes the bird a fortnight to make the hole deep enough, and then a little hay or wool with a few feathers are put at the end, and the eggs are laid on this snug bed. This same hole serves for two or three years; but if it falls in during winter, a new one is made. Those who watch swallows in the autumn may hear the shrill note of one, that seems to be a leader, for at that call a flight of them rise at once into the air and wheel about. This is done for many days, till the wind sets the way they want to go, and we see them no more for that year. When hungry, the swallow flies with its beak open, and the snap of the bill may

often be heard quite plainly when an insect is caught. The swallow has no song; but we love its cheerful note—a sort of warbling—as it works, which begins at day-break, and does not end till quite dark. The nest is hung under some shelter, and is open at the top. It is made of moist earth, which the bird brings, bit by bit, in its bill, from the side of a pond or stream, or from a puddle in the road. The mud is taken up first, and then straw and grass mixed with it. The inside is full of soft feathers, which make a warm bed of down for the nestlings. The swallow loves warmth, and will sometimes build in a stack of chimneys, and there rear its young, in spite of the smoke around.

A pair of swallows once built their nest in a school-room. The window had been left open at night, and the birds fixed on a ledge, and went on with their work while forty boys were in school, and no one did any harm to the birds. A nest was once found under a lamp-stand in an open passage, close to a kitchen door. The lamp was taken down to be cleaned every day, and it was moved again at night, to

be lighted; yet the swallows built there, and the same birds came to that place for four years.

These birds will join in a flock to drive away a hawk or any other bird of prey.

Swallows drink and wash while on the wing, as they skim over the water. Here it seems as if the bird could never tire, for we see it always flying from day-dawn till night. When they have to cross the sea, they take their flight in a straight line, and have been known to drop down as if worn out, and alight on the rigging of ships at sea. After a short rest on the masts of a vessel, they have been seen to dip into the ocean, and rise from it fresh again, and able to go on the way still before them.

The swallow! the swallow! she does with her bring
Soft seasons, and all the delights of the spring.

20. THE CHILD'S MAY SONG.

A MERRY little maiden,

In the merry month of May,
Came tripping o'er the meadow,
As she sang this merry lay:

‘ I’m a merry little maiden,
My heart is light and gay,
And I love the sunny weather
In the merry month of May.

‘ I love the pretty lambkins,
That gaily sport and play,
And make such frolic gambols,
In the merry month of May :
I love the little birdies
That sit upon the spray,
And sing me such a blithe song
In the merry month of May.

‘ I love the blooming flowers
That grow on bank and brae,
And with them weave my garlands
In the merry month of May :
I love to see the green leaves,
The leaves that fell away,
Come back to clothe the hedges
In the merry month of May.

‘ I love my little sisters
And my brothers ev’ry day,
But I seem to love them better
In the merry month of May ;

For the winter now is over,
We run about and play,
And Nature seems to love us
In the merry month of May.'

21. THE SEASONS—SUMMER.

Oh, come ye into the summer woods,
Where entereth no annoy,
All greenly wave the chestnut leaves,
And the earth is full of joy.

ALL boys and girls love the summer. This is the season of our longest and hottest days; indeed the sun's rays are often so very hot that, when we are out, we like to get under the shade of the trees. Our gardens and fields are now made charming with the gayest flowers, which fill the air all around with their sweet perfume. The bees fly from flower to flower, and suck their sweet juices, of which they make the honey they store in their hives for the winter. All day long they are hard at work; and you, no doubt, have learnt how the little busy bee

Improves each shining hour,
And gathers honey all the day
From ev'ry opening flower.

They are workers, to be sure! and all boys and girls would do well to learn from them not to be idle and waste their time.

The trees are all in full leaf, and it is pleasant to hear the rustling of their branches and leaves over our heads, as they wave to and fro in the wind. The birds sing now only in the cool parts of the day; for about noon, when the sun is high up in the sky and pours down his burning rays, most of them go to roost.

For when the sun pours down his ray,
The bird will cease to sing;
He'll seek the cool and silent shade,
And sit with folded wing.

Then the woods are all silent and still, except the babbling of the brook, the humming of the bees, or the buzzing of the flies around our heads. As the sun descends in the sky, the day becomes cooler, and then the birds awake, and are busy again searching for food, singing, or chasing each other as if in sport. After sunset, you will often hear the blackbird and the thrush pouring forth their mellow, clear notes, as each stands perched on the

topmost branch of a high tree, within sight of his mate, who perhaps sits somewhere below on her nest.

Thousands of insects appear at this time of the year, and sometimes do a great deal of damage to the fruits, flowers, and leaves. Numbers of flies may be nearly always seen in the windows and other places, where often the cunning spider weaves its web to catch them. Many of these creatures are caught by the swallow, as you see him skim so swiftly and lightly through the air.

This is the season when the long grass is mown, and hay is made in the meadows. That is a happy time for both old and young in the country village; and all children like the fun of the hay-field, where they help to toss and turn the grass, in order that it may become dry. Here little infants are often seen trying to trail the long rake after them; and they are so pleased if they can manage to do so. If you know what a hay-field is like you can fancy that you hear the loud shouts of glee, as one of the youngsters is buried under a haycock by the rest. Hay-making is truly a merry time for all.

In summer the sheep are shorn of their wool. Before this is done, they are brought by men, boys, and dogs, with much shouting and noise, to the bank of a running stream. Into this they are plunged and driven across till their fleeces are clean and white. You ought to see how they scamper over the field, and how the shepherd's dog follows them and brings them back again. After being washed, their wool is all cut off with a large pair of shears.

You see then that though summer is such a merry time, there is plenty of hard work to be done while it lasts.

22. BUTTER AND CHEESE.

Cows are, as you know, of great value to us ; but chiefly so on account of the milk which they yield, and from which butter and cheese are made. To make butter, the milk is put into large vessels or bowls, and stands until the cream rises to the surface, which it does after some hours. This cream is skimmed off with great care, and poured into a churn, which is then turned

quickly round and round. Thus the cream inside is shaken about, and, after a while, lumps of butter are found floating about in the churn. These are taken out, and having been washed two or three times, in clear, cold spring water, are well pressed, so as to force out any milk that may remain in. A little salt is then worked in, and the butter made up into pounds and half-pounds for sale or use. This is called fresh butter. But a great deal of butter made in the summer is salted in small tubs or casks for winter use; and much salt butter is sent to England from other countries. The liquid in the churn, from which the lumps of butter have been taken, is called butter-milk, and is chiefly used for feeding pigs.

Cheese may be made from cream alone, or from new milk; also from skim-milk, and even from butter-milk. The milk is made rather warm, and something, called rennet, is put into it; the whole is stirred and left till the milk curdles. The curd is cut up with a cheese-knife, and after having stood for a little while, is taken by the dairy-maid, wrapped in a coarse cloth, and

broken very small by the hand. Without being taken out of the cloth, it is then placed in a round mould, and put into the cheese-press, where it is squeezed so tight that not a drop of liquid is left in it. It is broken up and pressed in this way three or four times ; salt is added to it ; and when it no longer requires breaking, it is turned daily, till it becomes fit for use.

The liquid which so much care is taken to squeeze out of the curds, is called whey. It forms a wholesome drink, and is of value for feeding swine.

23. THE COW.

THANK you, pretty cow, that made
Pleasant milk to soak my bread,
Every day, and every night,
Warm, and fresh, and sweet and white.

Do not chew the hemlock rank,
Growing on the weedy bank ;
But the yellow cowslips eat,
They will make it very sweet.

Where the purple violet grows,
Where the bubbling water flows,
Where the grass is fresh and fine,
Pretty cow, go there and dine.

24. THE ROBIN.

PART I.

THE Robin is a well-known bird to most children in this country, for it is one of those that remain with us all the year round. When full grown, it is not very large; its throat and breast are of a deep orange-red colour, from which it takes the name of red-breast. Its back and tail are green tinged with brown, while the wings are somewhat darker in hue. The hen robin is smaller than the male bird, and her breast is not so bright a red. Young robins have not the red breast, but are mottled with brown, till after they get their second coat of feathers.

It is not only for the rich red plumage on its breast, or its sparkling black eye, or even for its 'wood-notes wild,' that we all love the robin; it is because that, more than any other of our wild birds, it is friendly with man. And the story of 'The Children in the Wood,'—in which we are told how the robin red-breast 'did cover them with leaves,'—has done much to make us welcome this bird when it comes to our

doors. There are few boys indeed who would not spare the robin's nest, which they look upon as something to be guarded from harm.

The robin is an early riser. Some say that he is even up before the lark, which wakes just after dawn; and it is certain he is one of the latest to go to roost at night, though he is rarely heard singing after twilight. Robins sometimes choose queer places in which to build their nests. They have been known to take up their abode in a saw-pit, where the men were daily hard at work; in a bed-room, in the festoons of the hangings of the bed; in a hole in the wall of a school-room; and a pair of robins once built their nest in a parish church, and fixed it to the church bible as it lay on the reading-desk. But red-breasts mostly build in quiet lonely spots, under thick bushes, or in a snug hole in a mossy bank, or in a crevice among the tufts of green ivy which wind round the trees, or which hang over an old wall. The nest is made of moss, mingled with dry grass and oak leaves, and lined with hair and nice soft feathers, to keep

the young warm. In this the hen robin lays from five to seven whitish eggs, spotted with reddish brown. On these she sits thirteen or fourteen days, when the young appear, and in about three or four weeks more they are fledged and fly away.

THE ROBIN.

PART II.

In the summer and autumn this bird lives on worms, insects, and berries. You may often, during these seasons, see a red-breast in the garden, hopping about and jerking its little tail, while its bright eyes are peering around for food. If, by chance, you are digging, and happen to turn up a worm, the moment you are gone the robin is down upon it, and either makes a meal of it there and then, or else flies to its young ones with it.

All who have lived in the country know that, during the winter, when the robin cannot find enough food in the fields, it pays us a visit. 'As ice and snow thicken on the ground it grows bolder and bolder, tapping at the window-pane, as if to ask

for crumbs ; flying in front of us, if a clear day invites us to a walk in the field or the garden ; now hopping so near us that we think to catch it with the hand, and then flying a little way off, holding its head on one side, as if to listen, and watching us all the time with its brightest of eyes.' It becomes so tame that it will even enter our houses, hop about on the floor of the room, and pick up the crumbs which are thrown to it. In the cold weather it is very pleasant to listen to the soft warbling song of a robin perched on the topmost branch of some tree near the house. Let us, therefore, always give the red-breast a hearty welcome when he pays us a visit.

'A pair of robins once built their nest amongst some straw in a waggon, while it stood under a shed with a load packed up for a long journey. The young were hatched just before the waggon was sent away. One of the old birds went with it, and only left the nest from time to time, to get food from a hedge near at hand while the horses took their rest. The robin and its brood came safely back in the waggon to their native place, after a slow journey of one hundred miles.'

25. WELCOME, LITTLE ROBIN.

WELCOME, little Robin
With the scarlet breast !
In this winter weather
Cold must be your nest.
Hopping o'er the carpet,
Picking up the crumbs,
Robin knows the children
Love him when he comes.

Is the story true, Robin,
That you were so good
To the little orphans
Sleeping in the wood ?
That you saw them lying,
Pale, and cold, and still,
And strewed leaves above them
With your little bill ?

Whether true or not, Robin,
We are glad to see
How you trust us children,
Hopping in so free.
Hopping o'er the carpet,
Picking up the crumbs,
Robin knows the children
Love him when he comes.

. And though little Robin
Has no gift of speech,
Yet he can a lesson
To the children teach ;—
Still to trust that blessings
Will be richly given
When they ask their Father
For their bread from Heaven.

26. BEARS.

THERE are many kinds of bears known to man, all of which differ more or less in size and colour. Some are large and fierce, while others are small, gentle, playful, and can be soon tamed. The bears we mostly see or hear about are either brown, black, or white. All these have stout bodies clothed with fur, thick limbs, and very short tails.

The brown bear is a savage beast, and lives alone among the high mountains or in the thick forests, where he often makes his abode in the hollow of a large tree. Into this den he retires during the winter season, and there remains in a deep sleep until the warm spring returns, when he rouses,

and comes forth very thin, and so hungry that he is ready to devour anything he can get in the shape of food. When he attacks a man, he rises on his hind legs, and hugs his victim between his fore-paws, and thus tries to squeeze him to death. His claws are strong, and fitted for climbing; and sometimes he nestles very high up in the trees. The flesh of this, as well as that of the black bear, is often eaten when young.

The black bear lives chiefly on wild fruits, but when he can catch plenty of fish, he will frequent the shores of the sea to do so. Like the other kinds, he eats flesh only when he cannot procure his proper food; when he is driven to this, he often destroys great numbers of pigs. In common with most bears, he is very fond of honey; and when he finds a tree in which the wild bees have stored up their honey, he will climb the tree, and gnaw away for hours, till at last a hole is made large enough to admit his paws. Then, caring nothing for their stings, he robs the bees of all their winter stores.

The white bear, sometimes called the Polar Bear, lives in very cold countries,

where the ground is never free from snow, and where, even in summer, mountains of ice float about in the sea. This is the largest of all the bears, and has a longer head than any of the other kinds. He never goes far away from the shore, and lives upon fish and seals, often diving into the water for the former, and chasing the latter over the ice. But when very hungry, he can make a meal of mountain berries, or even of sea-weed.

I will now tell you a story about the bear. In the East of Europe is a long chain of mountains, and not far from the highest of these there dwelt, in one of the valleys, an infirm old woman. Her only cow one day had strayed, and was nowhere to be found; she therefore made up her mind to set forth in search of the truant. Leaving her cottage at dawn one morning, she rambled up the valley for some hours, without finding the least trace of the missing cow. Though tired with the useless pursuit, she held on her way, till at length coming into a wooded glade she saw the well-known dark brown hide through some bushes. Vexed at the long chase



the brute had led her, she began dealing it a shower of blows with her birchen staff. Up leaped the beast, turned sharply round, and you may judge of the good dame's surprise when she saw it was a large brown bear she had been thrashing without mercy. The two stood staring at each other for a little while, when Bruin, seized with a sudden fear, turned tail and made off.

27. THE LARK AND HER YOUNG ONES.

AN old lark built her last nest during the season, in a nice field of green corn; and here in due time she hatched her young. For some time all went on well; but do what she could, the corn began to change colour and ripen before the brood were fully fledged and able to fly. Fearing that the reapers would be set to work, and either take away or destroy the nestlings, one very bright morning, before she went out in search of food, she warned them to be always on the alert—to keep not only their eyes but their ears open. ‘Should the owner of this field and his son come,’ said she, ‘to see whether the corn is ready

for the sickle—as come they are almost sure to do this fine day—be sure and listen to all they say : treasure up every word against my return, and so we shall learn when to quit our present abode.’ Soon after the lark had gone, sure enough father and son came and stopped within a few yards of the nest. The young larks saw them, and lay quite close to each other as still as mice. ‘This corn is ripe enough to be cut down,’ said the man ; ‘go amongst our friends and neighbours, and ask them to come to-morrow at daybreak to assist us in reaping it.’ On the return of the old lark, she found her brood in a great fright ; and the moment they saw her, they told her all they had heard during her absence, and begged her to remove them forthwith. ‘Time enough,’ said she ; ‘if he trusts to his friends and neighbours, he will have to wait awhile for his harvest : we need be in no hurry yet to remove. But listen well again to-morrow. In the meantime, enjoy yourselves ; for I have brought you plenty of food.’

Early next morning, just after the lark had left her nest, the father and son came



to the field; but no friends were there to meet them. The sun rose higher and higher in the heavens; the owner and his boy stayed till noon, but still no one came to aid them. Nothing therefore could be done that day. 'This corn ought not to stand any longer,' said the father; 'I see we cannot depend upon friends and neighbours to give us a helping hand: we must call in our kinsmen; and therefore, my son, go to your uncles and cousins, and ask them to come to-morrow betimes, to help us to reap.' All this was heard by the young larks, who, in greater fear than before, waited till their mother came home. 'Oh! mother,' said they, when they beheld her, 'the owner has sent for his brothers and nephews to come and assist him.' 'If that be all,' said she, 'you may again dismiss your fears, and sleep in peace: we shall not yet change our dwelling. But next time be most careful to notice what is said, and be sure you let me know.' She went abroad the next day, and the owner coming as before, and finding none of his kinsfolk, said to his son, 'We have been much to blame to depend upon others to do our

own work: so to-morrow morning each of us will take a sickle and reap the corn ourselves.' When the young ones told their mother this—'Then,' said she, 'it is time to be off, indeed; for when any one resolves to do his own work, instead of leaving it to others, you may be sure that it will be done.' Before next morning came, all the larks were in a place of safety.

28. THE LARK.

I HEAR a pretty bird—but, hark !

I cannot see it anywhere :

Oh ! it is a little lark,

Singing in the morning air.

Little lark, do tell me why

You are singing in the sky ?

Other little birds, at rest,

Have not yet begun to sing ;

Every one is in its nest,

With its head beneath its wing.

Little lark, then tell me why

You're so early in the sky ?

You look no bigger than a bee,
In the middle of the blue,
Up above the poplar tree;
I can hardly look at you.
Little lark, do tell me why
You are mounted up so high?—

‘Tis to watch the silver star
Sinking slowly in the skies;
And beyond the mountain far
See the glorious sun arise:
Little lady, this is why
I am mounted up so high.

‘Tis to sing a merry song
To the pleasant morning light;—
Why linger in my nest so long,
When the sun is shining bright?
Little lady, this is why
I sing so early in the sky.

‘To the little birds below
I now sing a merry tune;
And I let the ploughman know
He must come to labour soon:
Little lady, this is why
I am singing in the sky.’

29. THE MONKEY.

IN nearly all towns you may often see in the streets poor men with organs, which they grind, grind, grind all day long for the few halfpence they may chance to have given them. Sometimes these men, besides their organ, have a monkey, which, if you stop a few moments, will amuse you with the funny tricks his master has taught him. When bidden to do so, he will dance, beat a small drum, pretend to play a fiddle, shoulder a little gun as if he were a soldier, and then take off his cap and hold it out in order that those who stand round may drop something into it. Such a monkey is well worth looking at for a few minutes, and you may have many a hearty laugh at him. The monkey's face is something like that of an old man; he has a roundish head; his whole body, except his face and the palms of his hands, is clothed with hair, sometimes long and sometimes short. Instead of feet he has four hands, and with these he can grasp anything, and thus is able to climb into all sorts of high places.

In the warm countries where monkeys live wild, they make their abode in the woods and forests, and spend nearly all their lives among the branches of the trees, hardly ever coming down to walk along the ground, for which their four hands are not at all suited. They spring very nimbly and quickly from bough to bough, and from tree to tree; in doing which, some of them can use their tails like hands to grasp the strong branches, while they swing themselves along. Living thus mostly in the trees, you might guess that their food consists of most kinds of fruits, berries, and nuts that are to be found in the woods where they dwell. Some kinds of monkeys like to gather in large numbers, and form themselves into a sort of village or town. They appear always to be very merry, and chatter and make faces at each other from morning till night. They watch over their young ones with great care, and provide all the comforts they can for their little ones.

All boys and girls who live in London, and those who ever visit that large city, should go and see the monkeys in the

Gardens in Regent's Park, where all sorts of wild beasts are kept. Throughout the day the Monkeys' House is nearly always full of people, watching and laughing at the pranks of the funny creatures. Some one's stick is snatched out of his hand, or the string of a lady's bonnet is pulled off, or a boy's cap is all at once gone from his head—and all are taken away far out of reach; and what is worse, no ceasing will induce the thief to bring the stolen things back again to their owner.

Many stories are told of the monkey; here is one of them. A party of ring-tailed monkeys wanted to cross a stream, over which there was no bridge. After some talk and chatter among themselves, the clever creatures ran along the bank, till they found a tall tree that grew over a narrow part of the stream. Up this tree some twenty or thirty of them climbed till they reached a high point. The foremost of them then ran out on a branch, round which he twisted his tail firmly, and holding on by that, hung head downwards. The next—a strong one too—climbed down the body of the first, and whipping his tail

round the neck and fore-arm of the latter, dropped off in his turn, and hung head down. The third monkey did likewise, and the fourth, and so on, until the last upon the string rested his fore-paws on the ground. They then began to swing backwards and forwards, slowly at first, but each time quicker and quicker, until the last monkey was able to catch hold of the limb of a tree on the other side of the stream. The chain of monkeys was now fast at both ends, and formed a bridge, over which the whole troop, to the number of four or five hundred, quickly ran. Some of the strongest then seized the end of the chain which had passed the stream first, and lifted it higher up the tree, so as to be level with the other end. As soon as all was ready, the first monkey let go his hold and the whole chain was swung over and safely landed.

30. THE THREE HATCHETS.

A WOODMAN one day lost the hatchet by means of which he had long earned a living for himself, his wife, and his

children. He sought for it in all parts of the wood, but failed to find it. What was he to do? He had no means wherewith to purchase a new one, as all his wages had been spent for food and other things of which he, his wife and children, had need. You would have been sorry for the poor man, had you seen him, tired and weary, give up the search for his hatchet as a bad job. The tears coursed each other down his cheeks as he thought of those at home, and he cried out, 'O my hatchet; would that I could find it again, or that some one else might do so and return it!' As he went along in great distress of mind, he was met by the king, who made him relate his loss. Then the king said to him, 'Do not grieve so much; I think, perhaps, I can find your hatchet. But would you know it again, if you saw it? The fact is, one of my servants picked up a hatchet as we came along.' The woodman was then shown one with a handle of gold, and asked whether it was his. He was tempted by the sight of this to say Yes; but only for a single moment, for he had been taught at school

always to speak the truth. 'No,' replied he, 'that is not like my hatchet at all.' A hatchet with a silver handle was then brought, and to the same question as before, he gave the same answer. At length his own, with its plain handle of wood, was shown him; and as soon as he saw it, he shouted with joy. 'That is mine, worth more to me than both the others.' 'You shall have all three,' said the king, 'as your reward for speaking the truth.'

31. THE CAMEL.

HAVE you ever seen a picture of the camel? If not, when you read this lesson for the first time, your teacher will perhaps be kind enough to show you one, or to draw one on the black board for you. I will tell you something about the camel.

The camel is from seven to eight feet in height, and is, therefore, much higher than the horse. Rough hair covers its body all over; its legs are long and slender; and its feet are so broad, that they do not sink into the soft sand over which it has

so often to travel. The head of the camel is small, and is placed on a thin, long neck, so that it is able to reach food and water placed for it on the ground. It has the power to close its nostrils when it chooses, in order to keep out the drifting sand. Some camels have one large hump, and some have two, on their backs; which humps are made up of fat, and become smaller and smaller when the camel can get but little food on its long and tiring journeys.

This beast of burden is found in the very countries where it is of most use; that is, in countries where there are wide, sandy deserts, and where we find few houses, or pleasant streams, or shady palm trees; where often nothing but sand, rocks, and stones are to be seen around us as far as the eye can reach. People have sometimes to cross these deserts, and, in doing this, they use camels to carry themselves and their luggage, just in the same way as we should use horses in our country. But in those lands the camel is much better for this purpose than the horse or any other creature would be. Without feeling at all tired, it can walk a very long distance over the hot, dry,

soft sand (into which, as has been said, its feet do not sink) ; and it is able to travel far without drinking water, which it can but seldom obtain in the desert. I may here tell you that, when it does drink, it takes a great deal, which lasts in its stomach a long time ; and it is said that persons, to save themselves from dying of thirst, have sometimes killed their camels, to obtain this stored water. The camel is a patient, good creature, and from what you have now read, you will agree with me that it has been rightly named the 'ship of the desert.' A good 'ship' it is indeed ! for it will carry heavy loads across these deserts ; and at the word of command will kneel to allow its driver (whom we may call the 'captain of this good ship') to mount upon its back, or to get down ; and also to have its load put on or taken off. You will not wonder, now, when I tell you that the Arab loves his camel very much, and even sings verses in its praise. Its flesh and milk are used as food ; and its hair is made into cloth ; so that you see the camel is as useful to its owner as the horse, the cow, and the sheep are to us.

32. THE SEASONS—AUTUMN.

AUTUMN has come, and the corn which has grown up now changes its colour from green to rich brown and golden yellow, while the ears full of ripe grain bend on their slender stalks. This is a busy time for the farmer and his men; and you can go into the harvest-field and see the reapers cutting down the corn with their scythes or sickles, while others follow them and bind it into bundles called sheaves. After these sheaves have stood upright for some time they become dry; they are then carried off in waggons to the barn to be thrashed, or are made into stacks in the farm-yard. All the workers—men, women, and children—seem happy, and laugh and talk over their toil. After the last load has gone, the poor gleaners flock into the field to pick up the ears of corn that may have been left behind. I dare say you know the song of ‘The Gleaner,’ the first verse of which is—

Before the bright sun rises over the hill,
In the corn-field poor Mary is seen,
Impatient her little blue apron to fill
With the few scatter'd ears she can glean;

She never leaves off, nor runs out of her place,
To play or to idle and chat;
Except now and then, just to wipe her hot face,
And to fan herself with her broad hat.

Often, at this time of the year, heavy rains descend, and spoil many of our crops; and sometimes we have floods that sweep away herds and flocks, harvests, houses, and people.

Now the sportsmen take their guns, call their dogs, and off they go into the fields to shoot the partridge and pheasant. It is in autumn too that the fox and the hare are hunted with hounds; and a fine sight it is to see the chase. Away go the huntsmen in their scarlet jackets, on their fine horses, cracking their whips, and cheering on the dogs. Over hill and dale, through fields and over five-barred gates, they ride after sly Reynard, who dodges them about, but is caught at last after a very hard run.

This is the time when the trees in the orchards are all bending under their rosy weight. With what delight boys climb up and shake the branches; and how they laugh and chatter when the apples and pears fall to the ground, and while they

fill baskets with the fruit, and carry it into the house.

In the woods the birds have ceased their song; and towards the end of autumn the swallow, and those birds which do not remain in this country during the winter, fly away to warmer lands. But one little bird—the robin—sings on, and cheers us with his pretty warbling all through the winter. The squirrel gathers plenty of nuts while he can, and stores them up in his nest against the cold weather, when he would not be able to find any. The nuts are ripe now, and schoolboys can fill their pockets with clusters of them. When I was a boy there was nothing I liked better than to go nutting in the lanes and woods, and many a tumble I have had in climbing up the trees.

In autumn there are but few flowers left, as they have most of them faded and fallen off, while the seed-vessels have taken their places. The leaves of the trees change their colour, and turn yellow, red, and brown; and during that time they look very pretty. But the winds sweep through the trees, and down fall the leaves, whirl-



ing and dancing through the air, till they reach the ground, where they lie in heaps.

After the heat and the glare of the summer, autumn is a very pleasant time. While it lasts there is a great deal of work to do, and boys and girls at school must take care they are busy too.

33. THE PET LAMB.

THE dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink;

I heard a voice; it said, 'Drink, pretty creature, drink;'

And looking o'er the edge, before me I espied

A snow-white mountain lamb, with a maiden at its side.

No other sheep were near, the lamb was all alone,

And by a slender cord was tether'd to a stone;

With one knee on the grass did the little maiden kneel,

While to that mountain lamb she gave its evening meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his
supper took,
Seemed to feast with head and ears, and
his tail with pleasure shook ;
But now, with empty can, the maiden
turned away,
Yet ere ten yards were gone, her footsteps
did she stay :

‘ What ails thee, young one ? what ? why
pull so at the cord ?
Is it not well with thee ? well both for bed
and board ?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as
grass can be ;
Rest, little young one, rest ; what is’t that
aileth thee ?

‘ What is it thou wouldst seek ? hast thou
forgot the day
When my father found thee first in places
far away ?
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou
wert owned by none,
And thy mother from thy side for evermore
was gone.

‘He took thee in his arms, and in pity
brought thee home ;
A happy day for thee! then whither wouldst
thou roam ?
A faithful nurse thou hast : the dam that
did thee yeau,
Upon the mountain tops, no kinder could
have been.

‘Thou know’st that, twice a day, I have
brought thee in this can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as
ever ran ;
And twice in the day, when the ground is
wet with dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk—warm milk
it is, and new.

‘Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout
as they are now,
Then I’ll yoke thee to my cart, like a pony
in the plough,
My playmate thou shall be, and when the
wind is cold,
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house
shall be thy fold.

‘ Alas ! the mountain tops, that look so
bright and fair,
I’ve heard of fearful winds and darkness
that come there ;
The little brooks that seem all pastime and
all play,
When they are angry, roar, like lions for
their prey.

‘ Here thou need’st not dread the raven in
the sky ;
Night and day thou art safe, our cottage
is hard by.
Why bleat so after me ? why pull so at thy
chain ?
Sleep—and at the break of day I will come
to thee again !’

34. THE PLUM CAKES.

THERE was a little boy whose name was
Harry, and his father and mother sent
him to school. Harry was a clever fellow,
and loved his book, and he got to be the first
in his class. So his mother made him
a nice cake, stuffed full of plums and
sweetmeats, and iced all over with sugar.

When Harry saw it, he jumped about for joy. He took his cake with him and ate till the bell rang for school, and after school he ate again till he went to bed; then he laid what was left under his pillow, and even sat up in the night to eat some. So he ate till it was all gone. But some hours after, this little boy was very sick and ill, and some one said, 'Harry has eaten all the rich cake himself very soon.' So his mother sent for the doctor, who gave him I do not know how much bitter stuff. Poor Harry did not like it at all, but he was forced to take it, or else he might have died.

Now, there was another boy, who was one of Harry's school-fellows; his name was Peter; and because he got on so well with his school-work his mother made him a cake. Now Peter thought within himself, 'I will not make myself sick with this good cake, as Harry did; I will keep it a great while.' So he took the cake up-stairs to his own room. And he locked it up in his box, and once a day he crept slyly up-stairs, and ate a very little piece, and then locked his box again.

So he kept it for four or five weeks, and it was not gone, for it was very large; but, behold! the mice got into his box and nibbled some. And the cake grew dry and mouldy, and at last was good for nothing at all; then he had to throw it away, and no one was sorry for him.

Well, there was another little boy named Willy who went to the same school. And one day his mother made him a cake. He ran off at once and called his school-fellows and said, 'I have got a cake; come, let us eat it. So they came about him like so many bees, and Willy took a slice of cake himself, and then gave a piece to one, and a piece to another, till it was almost gone. Then Willy put the rest by, and said, 'I will eat that to-morrow.' Soon after, while they were playing, an old blind fiddler came into the playground; he had a long white beard, and because he was blind, he had a little dog tied to a string to lead him. So he came and sat down upon a large stone, and said, 'My pretty lads, if you like, I will play you a tune.' And they all left off their sport, and came and stood round him. But Willy saw that while he

played, the tears ran down his cheeks, and Willy said, 'Old man, why do you cry?' And the old man said, 'Because I am very hungry. I have no one to give me any meals; I have nothing in the world but this little dog, and I cannot work for I am blind. If I could work, I would.' Then Willy went, without saying a word, and fetched the rest of his cake, which he had saved and put by for the next day, and he said, 'Here, old man; here is some cake for you.' And Willy put it into his hat; and the fiddler thanked him, and Willy was more glad than if he had eaten ten cakes.

Pray, which do you love best—Harry, or Peter, or Willy?

35. THE WOLF.

PART I.

THE wolf is larger and stronger than the dog; and although the two differ in many respects, they are without doubt closely akin to each other. The wolf has a long head, a pointed nose, ears erect and standing forward, tail straight and bushy, and wiry, strong legs. Its gaunt and grim-

looking body is clothed with rough, coarse hair, mostly of a greyish yellow colour, which in very cold countries becomes white in winter. Others have a bright red coat, with a short black mane along the spine.

The wolf is one of the fiercest of the beasts of prey. It is cruel and cunning, but at the same time often a coward. It lives in dark, lonely forests, where it makes its den far away from the dwellings of man. Its food is flesh, and during the greater part of the year it supports itself on hares, birds, and any other small creatures which it can catch. But in the depth of winter, when snow covers the ground, wolves often collect in packs of many hundreds, and hunt in this way. They then become most fierce and daring, and will even enter a village, and attack sheep, lambs, horses, and oxen. Packs of these wild beasts have often pursued people riding or driving near forests, for the purpose of making a meal of them and their horses. I have read an account of a man, who was in great danger of losing his life in this manner. He was going across the snow in a sledge, when he was seen by a pack of wolves. In an in-

stant they were after him, howling with hunger and fury. As often as they came up with him, he shot the foremost ones dead, and when they fell, the rest stayed to devour the bodies. Thus he was able to get on ahead, and by doing the same thing again and again, at last he reached a place of safety. Tales are told of other persons who have been caught and eaten by these dreadful creatures. The howl of the wolf is anything but a pleasant sound; but how very awful it must be in the stillness of the night, to those who know that the wolves are on their track.

THE WOLF.

PART II.

In former times wolves were the dread and terror of our own land; and the first month of the year was called the wolf month, because at that time, when not able to find food enough, they used to come forth from the forest, and sometimes attack man. To get rid of these pests, king Edgar changed the tax which the Welsh had been in the habit of paying into a yearly tribute of 800 wolves' heads. Now,

there is not a wolf to be found wild in England; a fact which, no doubt, you are very glad to know.

A man, who lived in a village in France, learnt that there were a great number of wolves in one of the mountains near. With a dozen other men, he set out for the mountain. They trailed behind them a dead carcase, which they placed in a wood of oak, cork, and pine trees. The leader then made all his men climb on the trees around, while he posted himself on the branch of an oak, and then, placing his hands to his mouth, began to howl just like a wolf. In an instant one of these creatures howled from a distance in reply, and then two or three others set themselves to answer him from divers points of the mountain. The man went on with this kind of music, till at length, judging that the voices of the wolves were near enough, he ceased, for he knew then that the odour from the carcase would soon bring them into sight. First one wolf, then two, then three came, and so on till there were in all seven, and began the banquet. 'Fire, all of you!' cried the leader of the hunters; and each one let go two shots on the hungry guests, who bounded

off in a train one after the other. 'What!' said some one, who had come with the party to see the sport, 'not one of them killed?' 'Wait till to-morrow,' replied one of the hunters, 'and you will see.' Next morning the same persons, with others, came again to the wood, traced the bloody footsteps of the wolves, all of which, except one, were found stretched dead on one side or the other of the path they had taken; and the peasants felt sure that the missing one had met with the same fate.

36. THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

A NOBLE lion, tired and worn out after a hard day's hunting, was lying asleep at the mouth of his lair, when a mouse, not looking where he was going, ran over the mighty beast's nose, and awoke him. Starting up in a great rage, the lion clapped his paw upon the little creature, and would have crushed him in a moment, had not the mouse besought him to spare his life. 'Indeed,' cried he, trembling with fear, 'I did not intend to disturb your rest, and I am very sorry for having done so. As I meant no harm, I do hope you will not

stain your paw by taking the life of a worthless mouse. The lion, touched by his terror and smiling at his fright, at once let him go without harming him in the least. A few days after, while the same lion was ranging the forest in search of his prey, he fell into a net, that had been spread for him by the hunters. He struggled hard for a long time to break through it; but the more he tugged, the tighter the net became around his body. At last, finding himself without the slightest prospect of escape, he set up a fearful roar, that made the very ground tremble beneath him, and which filled the whole forest with its echo. The mouse heard it, and knowing the voice, ran as fast as he could to the spot. When he saw what was the matter, without waiting an instant he set to work with his teeth; and in a short time he had gnawed through the knots and meshes of the net, so that the lion was free once more. 'I owe you many thanks, my little friend,' said the lion, 'I see that kindness is rarely thrown away; and that there is no creature so small, but that it may be in his power to return a favour.'

37. THE STAR.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are !
Up above the world so high, .
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveller in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark ;
He could not tell which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep ;
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark
Lights the traveller in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

38. THE HORSE.

PART I.

THE horse is our finest, noblest, and most useful beast of burden or draught, and a good faithful servant he is to his owner. Only watch him, and notice how gentle he is when well treated, how willing to work hard, and ever ready to carry his master on his back. Look at the heavy loads some kinds of horses draw, when yoked to a cart or waggon; and you, no doubt, know of what great service he is to the farmer in helping him to plough and harrow the land, to carry home the sheaves of golden corn in harvest-time, and to do all sorts of hard work.

The horse has a thick skin, a long tail and flowing mane, and solid hoofs; the hair on his body is softer and finer than that of the cow, and all of you know how much he varies in size and colour. To prevent his hoofs from wearing out, when he travels along rough stony roads, men nail iron shoes on them. Sometimes when angry or teased, he kicks with his hind legs, and is able to break a man's limb by

a single stroke; while a blow on the head or chest from the hoof of a horse has often proved fatal.

The horse is fed mostly on grass, hay, and corn. He lives in a sort of house called a stable, which should always be kept dry, clean, and well aired; in this stable he has a nice bed of fresh straw. Often in fine weather, he remains out in the fields all night, lying down and sleeping on the soft grass. He seems to enjoy being free in this way, and you may often see a number of them trot and gallop from one end of the field to the other. They prance backwards and forwards, tossing their heads in the air, with their manes waving in the wind; while their bright iron shoes gleam in the sunshine, and sparks of fire fly from any stone they tread upon.

THE HORSE.

PART II.

There are many kinds of horses, but the finest of all is the noble beast of the Arabs. This people are very fond of their horses, train them by kindness to do what they wish, and never, by any chance, strike them.

The pure Arab horse is used only for riding, and is very fleet of foot. I dare say you have read the story of the Arab who, through want, agreed to sell his steed. When he was about to receive the gold, he looked first at the money, then at the horse, and said, 'No, my jewel! I cannot part with thee;' and the next moment he was on its back, and bounding again to his own home. In England we have the race-horse, used, as its name implies, for running in races. They are fine creatures, and often cost large sums of money. Then, there is the hunter, which will carry its master for miles after the hounds, leaping over hedges, ditches, gates, and anything that comes in its way; indeed, it appears to enjoy the sport as much as its rider. We have, too, that most useful of all, the cart or draught horse; which, from its shape, looks made on purpose for just the work it has to perform. You will often see some very fine horses of this kind drawing brewers' drays, and large waggons through the streets of large towns.

Some horses are trained for use in war;

and when a horse is quite fit for this, some one thus describes him. 'A sword is flashed before his eyes, but he does not flinch; a pistol is let off close to his ear, but not a muscle quivers; he listens without fear to the roar of the cannon; and the shouts of rushing legions will not induce him to stir from the gun-carriage, which is his "post of honour," till the signal is given for retreat, when his speed is equal to that of the wildest of his race.'

I must not omit to tell you a story I read not long ago. An Arab and his horse were taken by the Turks. The man was wounded, his legs were tied, and he was laid in a tent near which his captors were sleeping. During the night the pain of his wound kept him awake, and he heard his horse neigh amongst the others, which were shackled round the tent. He dragged himself along the ground, and at last reached his courser. 'My poor friend,' he said, 'what wilt thou do amongst the Turks? Go, return to the well-known tent. Tell my wife that I shall never more return; and thrust thy head through the curtains of the tent to lick the hands of my little

children.' While thus speaking, he had gnawed the goat's hair rope with which the horse was shackled, and set him free. On seeing his master bound and wounded at his feet, the faithful courser bent his head, snorted, and seizing in his teeth the leathern girdle around the captain's waist, he started off at full gallop, and carried him as far as his own tent. He there laid him down at the feet of his wife and children, and the moment after sank down with fatigue and died on the spot.

39. THE LION AND THE GNAT.

'AWAY with you, paltry insect, worthless scum of the earth,' said a lion to a gnat that went buzzing too near his face. 'Please not to call me by such names,' replied the little insect. Do you think that your grand title 'king of beasts' makes me fear you, or causes me any concern? Not in the least. The ox is much larger, and I should think stronger than you are; and him I am able to drive about just as I please. Against you also I declare war; and in a few minutes we

shall see which will get the best of the battle.' Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, before he began buzzing as loudly as he could, as the signal for the lion to prepare himself for the fight. Taking a long sweep through the air, and seizing the right moment, the gnat pounced down upon the neck of the lion, where he so stung the monarch of the woods as almost to drive him mad with rage and pain. The lion foamed at the mouth, his eyes glared, he roared aloud again and again. The other beasts of the forest when they heard this roaring, trembled, rushed away, and hid themselves; and all this alarm was the work of a creature so small. Now the gnat thrust his sting into the lion's neck, then into his nose, and the next moment into the tender parts of his nostrils; and laughed aloud as he saw the vain efforts of the lion to destroy him. The wretched beast in his fury tore himself with his claws, and beat the air and lashed his sides with his tail. Worn out at last he sunk upon the ground, and wished to die. The insect withdrew proudly from the field of battle, sounding his triumph,

as he went to announce to all the world that he had laid low the king of beasts. Vain of his conquest he flew through the air without looking which way he was going; till, on a sudden, he was caught fast in a web spun for the purpose by a spider, who had seen the whole of his battle with the lion, and had heard his boasting. The gnat tugged and strove hard to set himself free; but in a moment the spider pounced upon him, carried him off, and made a meal of him.

40. THE SEA AND SHIPS.

I AM going to take a walk by the sea-side, and perhaps some of my little readers will like to go with me. Have the goodness, therefore, to put on your cap or bonnet, and it will be as well to take a great coat or good shawl to throw over you, as the wind may be blowing freshly towards the shore. Here we are on the beach, which is of sand; in some places we should find it strewn with smooth stones called shingles.

Look out upon the sea, and behold what

an immense sheet of water it appears! Nothing but water before you, as far as the eye can reach; nothing but water on your right hand and on your left. The sea is white with foam, and the spray from the dashing waves almost reaches us where we stand. There is sure to be many of old ocean's wonders washed up on the sands to-day, and we shall be able to gather plenty of nice shells, or pick up bits of pretty sea-weed. You may find also star-fish, and small crabs, and many other creatures, that have been cast up by the tide. Look at the sea-gulls as they skim over the surface of the water, seeming rather to ride upon the wind than to fly; and there are numbers of wading-birds running nimbly along the sand. Let us sit down and I will tell you something about the sea.

This great ocean covers by far the larger part of the surface of the earth. Its waters look mostly of a green colour, and living things and plants without number are to be found in it. The great whale has its home in the deep; and in the sea we find creatures so tiny that we cannot see them with the naked eye.

You may ask, 'How do we get over this immense sheet of water, when we wish to get to other and far distant lands?' This is done by means of ships. Look, there is one; and what a noble sight a vessel is, as she goes gliding along with all her white sails spread out like so many wings. These sails are tied to large, strong poles or masts, which are fixed in the deck; and when the wind blows and fills them, the ship is driven along. Some one has said of a ship sailing,

The winds come around her in murmur and song,
And the surges rejoice as they bear her along;
See! she looks up to the golden-edged clouds,
And the sailor sings gaily aloft in her shrouds.

Sometimes the vessel is made to move by means of steam-engines, which are better than sails, for they can always make the ship go the way we wish, even though the wind is against us.

The men who take care of the ship, and who work on board are called sailors. They have to hoist the sails, steer the ship in the right track, keep the deck, cabins, and other parts quite clean, and to look after the load or cargo. A sailor's life is a very hard one, but he enjoys it; and we must

not forget that 'they who go down to the sea in ships see the great waters and the wonders of the deep.' You may always know a sailor by his wearing a loose blue dress, his bare neck, and his funny way of walking from side to side,—a habit he has got into from the rolling of the ship on the waves. This motion of the vessel often makes people sea-sick—a feeling which is not at all pleasant; but when the sickness is past, nothing can afford more delight—besides its being very healthy—to any one, than a voyage on the sea.

41. WINTER.

THE north wind doth blow, and we shall
have snow,

And what will the robin do then, poor
thing?

He'll sit in a barn, and keep himself warm,
And hide his head under his wing, poor
thing.

The north wind doth blow, and we shall
have snow,

And what will the swallow do then, poor
thing?

Oh! do you not know, that he's gone long ago
To a country much warmer than ours,
poor thing.

The north wind doth blow, and we shall
have snow,
And what will the honey-bee do, poor
thing?

In his hive he will stay, till the cold's gone
away,
And then he'll come out in the spring,
poor thing.

The north wind doth blow, and we shall
have snow,
And what will the dormouse do then,
poor thing?

Rolled up like a ball, in his nest snug and
small,
He'll sleep till warm weather comes back,
poor thing.

The north wind doth blow, and we shall
have snow,
And what will the children do then, poor
things?

When lessons are done, they 'll jump, skip,
and run,
And play till they make themselves
warm, poor things.

42. WINTER.

WINTER now has come and brought with it fogs, and clouds, and storms. We can no longer take such pleasant walks through the fields in the country as we could in spring, summer, and autumn. All the leaves are gone from the trees, whose branches and little twigs seem to stand out naked against the sky. The grass appears to wither and turn yellow, and in many parts the earth is quite bare. It has been said of winter—

There's not a flower upon the hill,
There's not a leaf upon the tree,
The summer-bird hath left its bough,
Bright child of sunshine, singing now
In summer lands beyond the sea.

And truly this is so; for now you see no flowers; many of the birds—such as the swallow, the blackcap and the cuckoo—have left us for warmer climes, while those that remain are all silent, save the pretty robin, who leaves the woods and pays us his yearly visit. At first he seems half afraid, and alights on the ledge of the window; but by degrees he gets bolder and

comes into the house, where he hops
across the floor,

And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is.

I am sure all kind children will welcome the robin, and throw him a few crumbs, for which he will well repay them, by warbling his sweet song as he sits on a tree near the house. You may sometimes see flocks of wild-ducks flying through the air with their necks stretched out in a very queer manner. They have come from the far north to this country, which even in winter is warmer for them than the land they have left. They will fly back again when spring comes.

The weather during this season is often very cold and wet; the air then feels damp, and the ground is soft and muddy. At other times the frost comes and hardens the earth, and covers all the little streams and ponds with a thick coating of ice. On this you will see merry troops of sliders and skaters, gliding swiftly along. How rosy and fresh they all look when they have tired themselves out. Often with the frost comes the snow; and a pretty sight

it is to watch it falling from the sky like feathers. First a few flakes are seen, then they descend faster and faster, till the air seems all alive with them. They are so light that the wind blows them about, this way and that, quite in a merry dance, before they reach the ground. In a short time, the fields, the woods, the houses, and all things have 'put on their winter robe of purest white.' Boys can now enjoy themselves amongst the snow, and they are often seen, after school-hours, chasing and pelting each other with snowballs—a sport they seem to take great delight in. In such weather, we should take care to wrap ourselves in thick coats and cloaks when we go out; and in doors, we are glad to sit around a warm, cosy fire, and tell tales and read to each other.

You see, then, that winter affords us many pleasures; and in that season there is one very merry time. I mean Christmas, which reminds us of the birth of our blessed Lord. All people, old and young, rich and poor, are joyful at Christmas. We hang the green holly in our rooms;

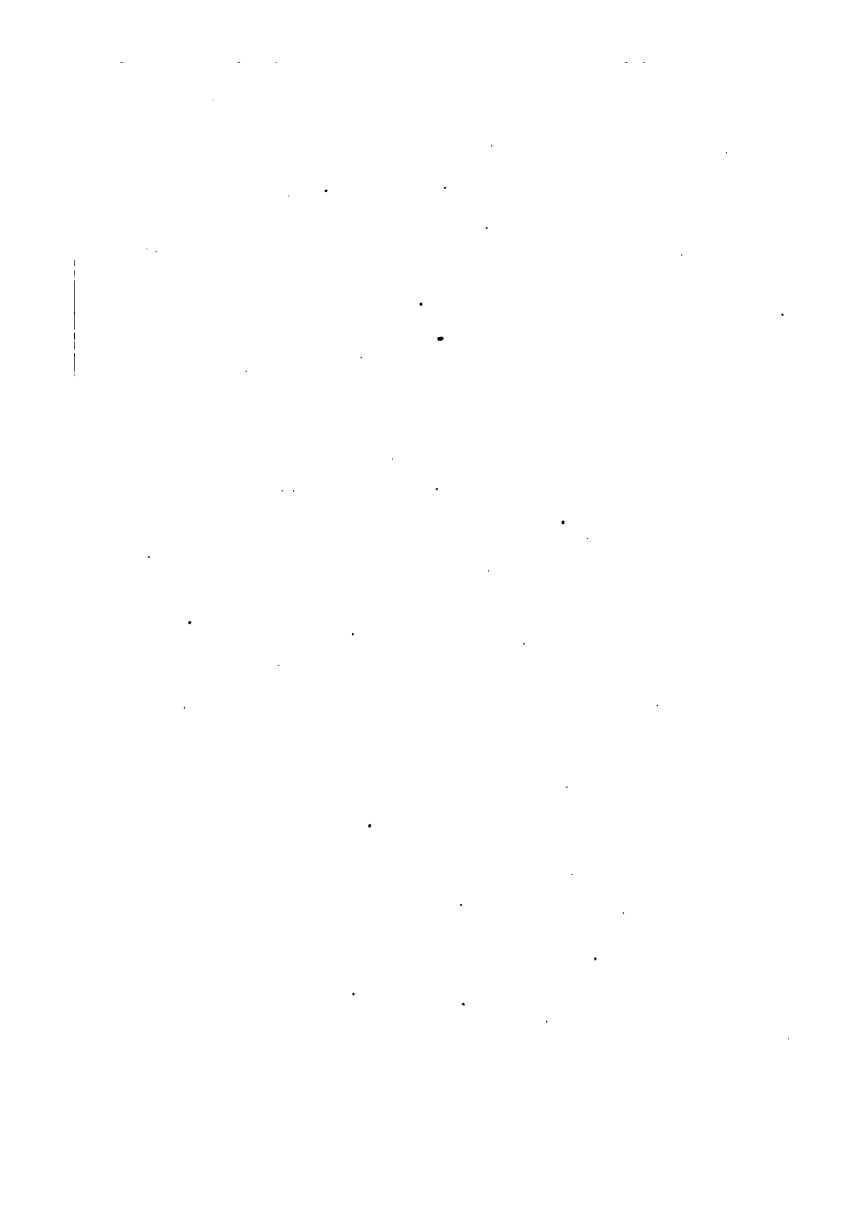
and I should say there is scarcely a boy or girl in England, who does not know that then we have our Christmas trees and magic lanterns, and play all sorts of games. But what children seem to enjoy most are the plum-puddings, and the mince pies, and such like good things. And I am sure I wish you all a very merry Christmas at this time of the year, and a great many more in years to come.

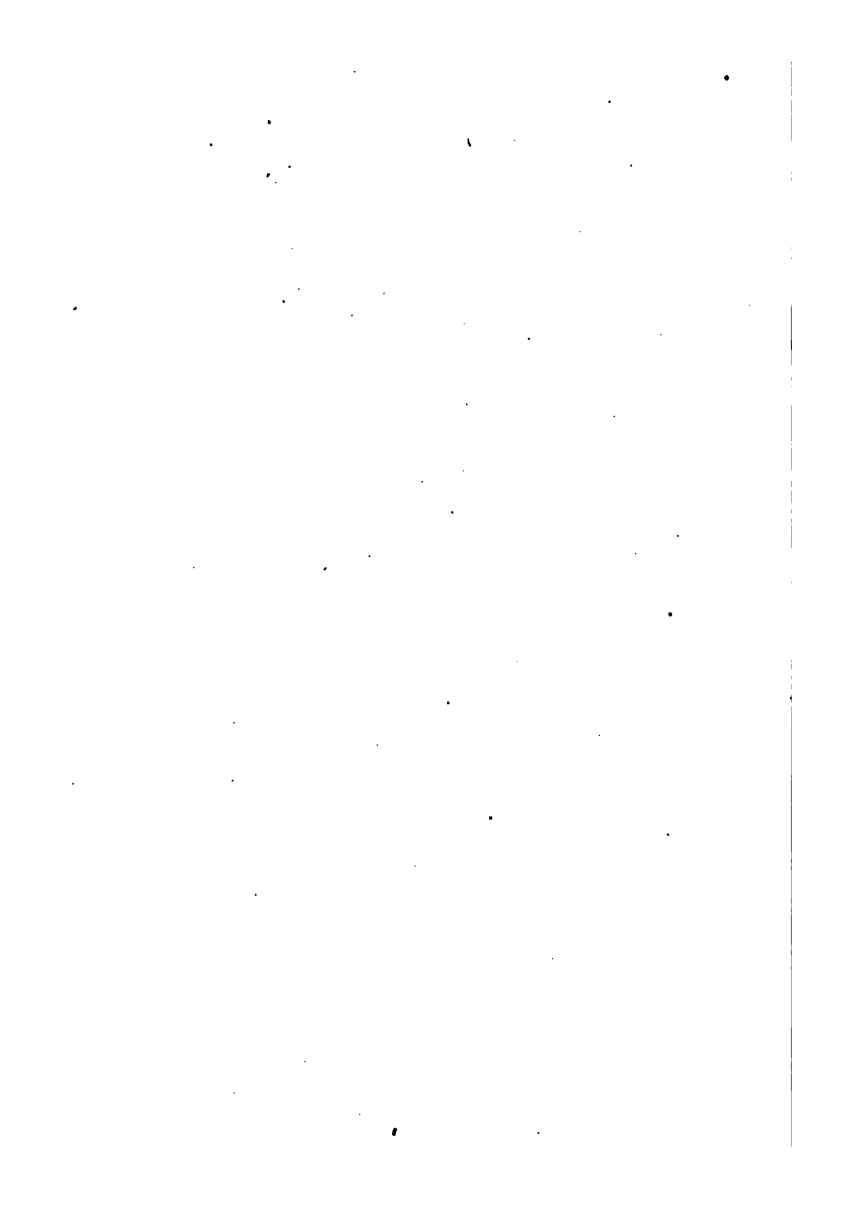
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NEW-STREET SQUARE

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the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased by 50% (Mental Health Foundation 1999). The prevalence of mental health problems has increased in the general population, and the incidence of mental health problems has increased in the prison population.

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the mental health needs of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (2000) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

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